

ELISA SMITH



When Garth Brooks invites you on stage to play a song, you play a song! Elisa met Garth when she attended a talk he and Trisha Yearwood were giving at Harvard in Cambridge, Massachusetts. A student at the time, Elisa was studying the neurological effects music has on the brain. During the talk, Garth mentioned that he still gets nervous before he performs and this resonated with her - she loved to perform, but struggled with stage-freight. During the Q&A portion at the end, Elisa raised her hand and asked him how he overcomes his nerves when he's on stage. After asking her name, and what kind of music she plays, he invited her on stage to play a song. After the performance, Garth gave her his guitar (the one she plays with now) and told her to sing her heart out. And that's what she's been doing ever since.

Elisa grew up in a small town in Illinois. She loved music from an early age - her earliest memory is gathering her stuffed animals and cuddling in her dad's guitar case while he practiced gospel tunes for church. As a child, she was enraptured by her grandmother's stories of Nashville and the Opry in the 50's and 60's. She also shared her father's love of classic rock from the 70's. And she fell asleep her mother's lullabies (which, as an adult, she learned were the dust-worn ballads of Woody Guthrie). Rock n roll and vintage country run in her blood.

She moved from her small town to the big city to attend Berklee College of Music. While at Berklee, Elisa studied music business and music production. It was during this time that she unearthed her passion for education. Fascinated by the science of music and fueled by her desire to increase access to music education, Elisa enrolled at Harvard to receive her Masters degree in Arts Education. It was here that she met Garth Brooks and Trisha Yearwood, and it was here that her life was changed forever.

After Elisa was "baptized by fire" by Garth Brooks, she returned to her roots. She began writing and performing with an unquenched ferocity. Her songs elicit feelings of nostalgia, pride, wanderlust, heartbreak, and good ol' fashioned boot-stompin' mischief and her sound has been likened to Loretta Lynn meets 1970's rock n' roll. In 2017, she hit the road and headed to Nashville to record her debut EP, "Hitch A Ride," which was released in May of 2018. Featuring talent from Grammy-winning and platinum-status records, the 6-song EP was produced by Johnny Duke, a gifted producer and guitar player who has played with Little Big Town, Miranda Lambert, and Chris Stapleton, among others, and was recorded at Spirit Radio Studio in East Nashville.

Referred to as "Boston's Honky Tonk Country Queen" and "one of the best original country acts in New England," she has been featured on 101.7 The Bull, Country 102.5, and other local radio stations. She's headlined and performed at festivals throughout New England, performed on Boston local television, and she has been featured in WBUR's the ARTery and HarvardEd Magazine.

It's been a wild ride, but Elisa is just warming up.